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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this training module is to assist participants in acquiring high-level basic counseling skills. Specifically, trainees will master those skills crucial to the four Carkhuff stages of basic helping. The ultimate purpose is to help counselors involved in Manpower Programs upgrade their interpersonal human relations/basic counseling skills, and thereby to provide pertinent counseling services to program participants. Topics covered in training include: goals and outcomes of the counseling process; four stages of helping as described by Carkhuff and Egan; skills necessary to accomplish the four stages; effective attending skills; effective responding skills; and advanced empathy skills. Training methods include: lecturette, small group and dyad interaction, simulation, trainer demonstrations, exercises, and discussions. Trainees will have "hands-on" experience with the skills, as well as supervision and feedback. (Author/JLL)

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A Higher Education Training Monograph

No. 15 in a series

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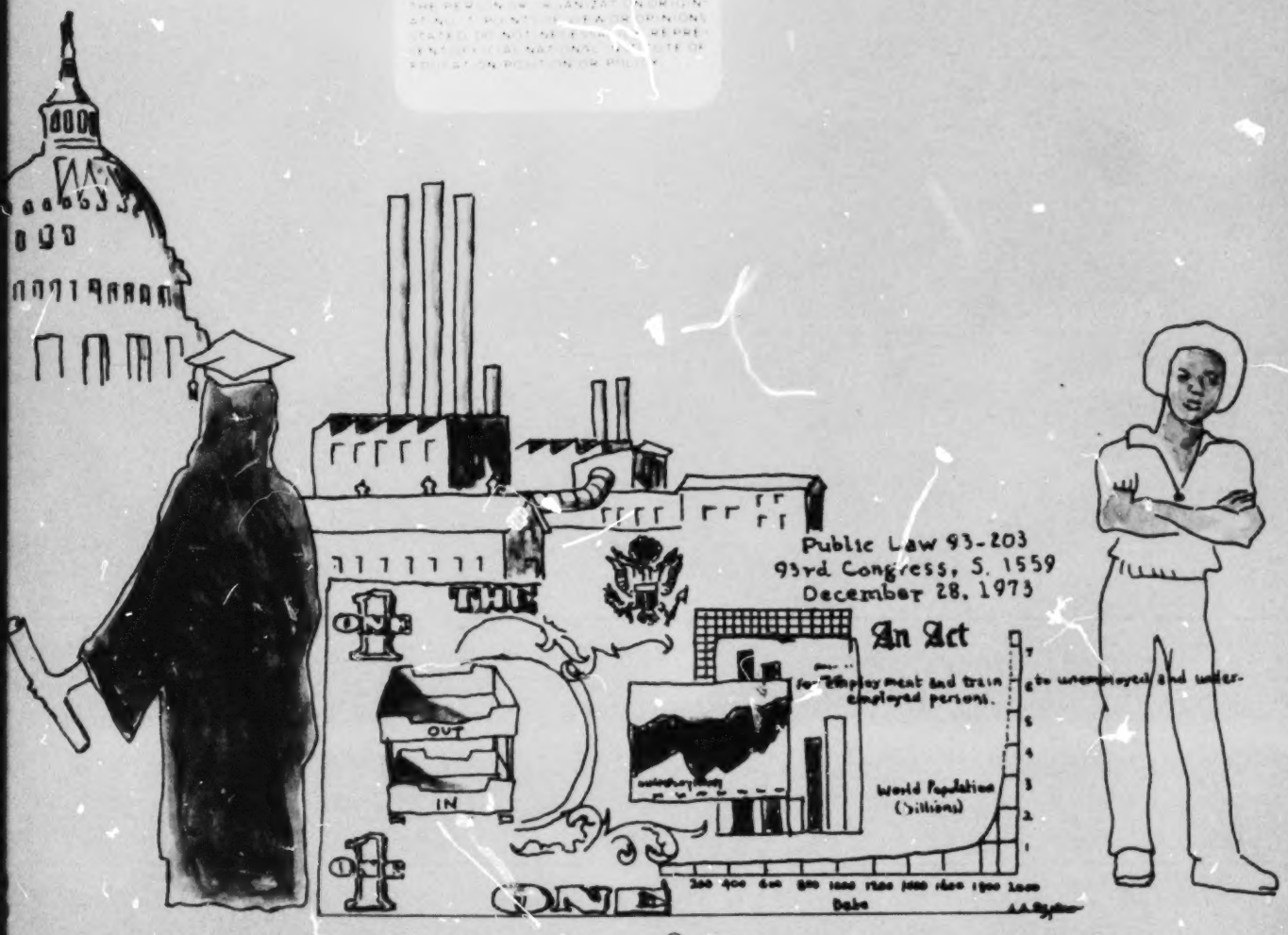

Human Relation Skills in Counseling

A Training Monograph

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INTRODUCTION

An essential feature of Manpower Programs is the direct provision of services to clients. Manpower workers need to be effective in a wide range of human relations skills so that these face-to-face contacts will be productive and advance both client and program objectives. In addition, human relations skills form the basis upon which effective counseling skills are developed; so to a large extent the development of high-level human relations skills is a precursor and an essential ingredient to the counseling process.

The purpose of this monograph is to present in a systematic manner those human relations skills which are basic to the counseling process. Counseling has been historically considered as one of the basic components of the Manpower Program and effectiveness in this component can serve as a valuable supportive adjunct to the primary goals of these programs. Effective counselors need to learn, relearn and master basic skills prior to engaging in more goal directed helping interventions. This training is designed to serve those objectives.

There are a number of clear needs to which this training package responds. Counselors in the field will tend to fall into two broad target categories: Those who have been trained in professional counseling programs and would benefit from a revisiting and renewal of basic skills and, secondly, those counselors who have not been systematically trained in professional programs and are dependent upon in-service training experiences for skill

acquisition. An additional factor to consider is the frequency of personnel turnover in Manpower Counseling Programs thus presenting a continuing need for in-service training experiences focusing on basic counseling/human relations skills. In summary, the essential purpose of this package is to:

1. respond to the need in the field for training and retraining in basic skills and
2. to provide participants with a theoretical and experiential skill base for the development of critical skills and
3. to build a base upon which more sophisticated counseling strategies can rest.

Scope of Training

This basic counseling skills package is designed for two full training days. Since there is a large amount of material to be covered, it is essential that the procedures outlined be carefully followed and the time-lines be scrupulously kept.

Although the training would be useful to professionally prepared and experienced counselors primarily as a revisiting and reinforcement of basic but critical material that can be de-emphasized in practice; it is most appropriate to the novice counselor or the counselor who has had little formal supervision and training beyond that provided in the job setting.

The training can be most effectively delivered by an individual who has a thorough theoretical and experiential grounding

in the following areas:

- basic developmental psychology
- basic learning theory
- counseling theory
- interview skills
- counseling techniques
- extensive counseling experience with target groups
- supervision skills
- experience in counseling skills training

It is important to emphasize that the trainer have both an experiential and theoretical background since both are necessary to effectively guide the training process. In addition, the trainer(s) must be skilled in the delivery of counselor training and especially skilled in human relations skills, particularly those related to the provision of constructive, yet direct, feedback to participants.

Purpose

The purpose of this training is to assist participants to acquire high-level basic counseling skills. Specifically, they will master those skills crucial to the four Carkhuff stages of basic helping. The ultimate purpose is to assist counselors involved in Manpower Programs to upgrade their interpersonal human relations/ basic counseling skills and to thereby provide, at a more reliable level, pertinent counseling services to program participants.

Objectives

1. To define the counseling process in terms of general goals and expected outcomes.
2. To describe and define the four basic stages of helping as described by Carkhuff and Egan.
3. To list and define each of the skills necessary to accomplish the four basic Carkhuff stages.
4. To demonstrate effective attending skills including active listening at a minimum effectiveness level.
5. To demonstrate effective responding skills at a minimum effectiveness level.
6. To demonstrate advanced accurate empathy skills at a minimum effectiveness level.

Training Methods

Each activity is designed to develop and refine basic helping skills. Because the activities are closely tied to skill acquisition, it is imperative that extensive supervision and feedback be available to the participants on a small group and individual level. The preferred ratio of staff to participants should be 1 trainer to every 6 participants.

Training Methods will include:

- lecturette
- small group interaction and practice
- dyad interaction

- simulated counseling in triads
- trainer demonstrations
- guided processing and feedback exercises
- guided discussion

A basic objective of the training methods will be to provide each trainee with "hands-on" experience with the skills together with supervision and feedback.

Sequence of Activities

DAY I

9:00-9:30 a.m. Introduction and Overview

1. The scope and nature of the training will be presented including a preview of coming attractions.
2. Each trainer will briefly introduce self and background.
3. Each trainee will be asked to introduce themselves providing the following information. (Use Transparency A):
   - Name
   - Employer
   - Percentage of time spent in counseling
   - Professional preparation, both in-service and professional degrees
   - Training expectations
   - Which element of the counseling process do you feel is most crucial?

9:30-10:15 a.m. Goals and Objectives of the Helping Process

Through a lecture/discussion the following topics will be covered:

1. Definition of counseling as a systematic intervention technique designed to help clients behave in more productive, self-enhancing ways in their respective worlds.
2. Discussion of behavior change as the only legitimate terminal goal in counseling.
3. Discussion of goals, stages and stage-specific skills involved in the Helping Process (Distribute Handout A-An Overview of the Components of the Helping Process) Use Transparency B.
4. Delineation of the relationship between life skills, helping skills and basic counseling skills.

10:15-11:00 a.m. Attending Skills Exercise

1. Trainees will be divided into triads - within the triad these roles will be assigned:

   a. Counselor
   b. Client
   c. Observer

   The clients will be instructed to present a personal concern they feel comfortable sharing in the group. (Examples of appropriate concerns will be presented). Observers will be asked to record carefully the interaction and to provide feedback to both the counselor and client. The

counselors, privately, are then instructed to vary the degree of attending they demonstrate during the interview (the other trainees take a coffee break). Initially, they must attend at the highest level possible (attending skills are briefly presented) and then, on a signal from the trainer to gradually stop attending to the client. (Examples are presented).

2. The entire group is reassembled and the trainees divide into groups. The trainers act as roving observers. After 4 to 5 minutes of interaction, the signal to stop attending is casually given.
3. The group is allowed to continue for another 3 to 4 minutes and then stopped.
4. Reassemble into the large group for discussion.

11:00-11:15 a.m. Discussion

1. Reactions from observers are discussed.
2. Clients are asked to report feelings.
3. Format of exercise is discussed.
4. Relevant attending skills identified and discussed.
5. Importance of attending emphasized.

11:15-11:50 a.m. Listening Exercise

1. See Handout B for instructions
2. Trainers act as roving observers providing direction and feedback as needed.

11:50-12:00 p.m. Discussion of Listening Exercise Emphasizing the Importance of Active Listening Skills

Brief summary of morning underlining significant learnings.

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00-1:15 p.m. Introduction to Responding Skills

In a lecture/discussion format the following topics will be covered:

1. Responding
   - A. Its critical role in setting the foundation for counseling
   - B. Dimensions to responding
     1. Physical Aspects
     2. Responding to Feelings
     3. Responding to Meaning

1:15-2:00 p.m. Responding: Large Group Demonstration

The trainers will begin this exercise by asking for 5 volunteers to participate in a counseling demonstration. Assure the potential volunteers

that they will be required to provide only one or two complex sentences regarding a personal concern, and not have to go through a full scale counseling interview.

Demonstration 1: Difference Between Sympathy and Empathy

Three clients and three trainers will face each other. The other participants will be asked to serve as observers and to provide feedback after the exercise. The trainers will respond as follows:

Trainer 1 - sympathetic response

Trainer 2 - empathetic response

Trainer 3 - sympathetic response

Trainer 4 - empathetic response

Examples:

Trainer 1 - sympathetic response

1. Attend Carefully.
2. Immediately respond in an impersonal manner expressing sympathy.
3. Use expressions such as "Gee, that's too bad." "That's a real problem, all right." "Oh. It must be awful to feel that way." etc.

Trainer 2 - empathetic response

1. Attend carefully.
2. Wait to respond.
3. Respond directly to the client's feelings using this format: (Use Transparency C) "You feel _____."
4. Appropriate expressions might be "You feel confused and upset." "You feel ashamed and embarrassed." "You feel happy, bubbly and 'on top of the world'."

Discussion: Clarify the distinction between sympathy and empathy emphasizing that effective responding is built upon empathic responses. Give a definition of empathy and reinforce its importance.

Demonstration 2: The Passive Discrimination of Levels of Responding

The purpose of this demonstration is to permit the trainees to observe and distinguish the differences between various response styles. Four separate response patterns will be modeled and the participants will be asked to observe and react to and evaluate each of them.

1. The first style that will be modeled will be a low level response style wherein the counselor

will violate the rules of effective responding, taking the focus off what the client has said and/or denying or rejecting the material contained in the client response.

2. The second response style modeled will be responding to content. In this particular response the counselor will respond only to the content of the client's statement avoiding all references to feelings.
3. The third response style will be the counselor responding to the feelings expressed by the client without making reference to the content.
4. The fourth model style will be a response to both the feeling and content of the client's statement.

At the termination of the exercise, the trainees will be asked to report their observations and to discuss the differences in style, as well as evaluating the various responses attempting to determine which appears to be most effective. The trainees who served as participants in this exercise will be asked to give their reaction to the counselor responses identifying their feelings about each. A major discussion point that should be developed here is whether or not a given response style

facilitates increased client self-exploration.

Directions:

Ask for volunteers. The volunteers will be requested to provide one complex statement regarding a life-concern or problem that they are experiencing. The trainers will then respond following the format. There will only be one response per client. While the demonstrations are occurring the remainder of the trainees will be serving as observers. At the end of this exercise, the trainers will conduct a discussion attempting to cover the points as indicated above.

C. Response formats (Use Transparency B)

1. Content: "You said_____"
2. Feeling: "You feel_____"
3. Meaning: "You feel____because_____"

Demonstration Summary

The major ingredient of effective responding is the inclusion of both feelings and the content of a given statement. No client is without a feeling component and these feelings will be integrally related to the content. It is important to emphasize that at this phase of helping, the counselor is attempting to develop an interchangeable level of communication

responding effectively to both the feelings and content of client statements. Both must be present to attain true interchangeability and responding at this level is critical for furthering the counseling process since this provides the basis for both counselor and client understanding of the concern. If the client feels that the counselor does not fully understand, this may prove to be a barrier to further counseling progress. If the counselor does not understand, then it is very likely that further interventions will be either inappropriate, distorted, or unproductive. Hence this becomes a crucial basic counseling skill and a critical step in the counseling process.

2:00-2:30 p.m. Small Group Exercise - Responding to Feelings

The purpose of this exercise is to give each trainee practice in responding to the feelings that are being expressed in client statements. The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. Form groups of 6 to 8 participants. Each group should have a trainer who will serve as a facilitator. In the groups, participants will take rotating turns serving in the role of client and counselor. The group will observe. Two chairs should be placed in the

middle of the group. The first pair should then nominate themselves, or be selected in some fashion, and go into the center of the group. One of the participants serves as the client. The client's role is to share a 20-30 second concern that they are presently experiencing with the counselor. The task of the counselor is to respond to the feelings that the client is experiencing. The counselor should use the format: "You feel _____." At the end of this short exercise the group provides feedback to the participants, specifically evaluating the accuracy of the counselors feeling response. The trainers role is to serve as facilitator to highlight important and/or relevant material.

The roles are, then, switched. The trainee who acted as counselor acts as client and visa-versa and repeating the procedure.

The exercise continues until all members of the training group have had the opportunity to serve as both client and counselor.

2:30-3:00 p.m. Responding to Feelings - Discussion of Exercise

The trainees will reassemble into a large group and discuss the learnings of the previous exercise.

A major focus will be the need for a feelings vocabulary. That is, each trainee must work to develop a rich affective vocabulary that will allow them to respond to the variety of feelings present in client responses. This is particularly true when they must respond to clients who may come from different social, economic, or age groups. It is imperative that they select an appropriately accurate feeling word(s) to capture and express interchangeably to the client the feeling(s) contained within a response. It should be emphasized that this particular component is the most overlooked aspect of responding. A major difference between counseling and conversation is that in counseling there is an attempt made to respond initially in an interchangeable manner to the feelings expressed in a message rather than merely responding to the content. As an aid to developing a feelings vocabulary the trainees should be given Handout C. A brief discussion of the contents should follow.

3:00-3:30 p.m. Lecture Demonstration - Responding to Meaning

At this point the trainee should be ready to "put it together." Responding to meaning integrates a feeling response with a content response in such

a way to highlight the full significance of what the client has said. The format that will be used in this particular approach is as follows:

"You feel _____ because _____." After "you feel . . ." the counselor is to insert the appropriate feeling word(s) and/or phrases that will interchangeably capture the feelings being expressed by the client.

The content component of the response will come after the word "because" at which time the feelings will put into their life experience context.

The counselor has then responded to the full meaning of what the client has expressed capturing both essential components of the message.

This particular step, the integration of feelings into a content perspective, is a crucial step in the counseling process leading to the completion of the Exploration Stage. It is not until this time that the counselor has communicated, actively, to the client that they in fact do understand the client's concern. This understanding is communicated through the interchangeable response, which emphasizes that if understanding has occured then it is possible to give it back, interchangeably, without either detracting or adding to what has been said.

The counselor can be sure that they have heard what the client has said and the client can feel secure in the knowledge that the counselor has taken the effort to understand how they experience their concern. It is not until interchangeability is established that the counseling can really go beyond and into the area of problem-solving and developing integrative self-understanding. So, to summarize, we have completed the exploration phase discussed in our basic skill model. We have attended to the client, listened actively to what they have had to say and have responded to the fullness of their message. An effective base now exists for continued work.

The trainers will now demonstrate effective responding. Volunteers will be elected from the groups to serve as the client. The role of the client will be to present a concern to one of the trainers who will act as a counselor. The client will be expected to work with the trainer for 5 or 6 minutes. The trainers' role will be to begin the exploration process with the client. They will attend, listen actively and respond appropriately. The trainer will attempt to demonstrate interchangeable responses to meaning, responding fully to both the feelings and the content as expressed by the

client. Initially, they will use the "You feel _____because _____" format but later generalizing to incorporate elements of their personal style. The role of the group and of the other trainers will be to serve as observers and provide feedback to the trainer and the client at the termination of the exercise. Questions will be answered and an opportunity for further exploration of these skills will be provided to the participants.

3:30-4:30 p.m. Small Group Practice: Responding to Meaning

The trainees will be divided into groups of three. In each triad there will be three rotating roles. The first role will be that of the client whose task will be to present a concern that they feel they can share and are willing to work on in this particular setting.

The second rotating role will be that of the counselor. The counselor's task is to attend, listen actively and respond to the concern as expressed by the client. As they respond they will be attempting to achieve a full, accurate, interchangeable response to both the feelings and content as expressed by the client. In essence they will be attempting to

complete the exploration stage of the basic counseling process.

The third rotating role will be that of observer. The observer's task is to react to the interaction between client and counselor and to provide feedback at the termination of the exercise. The counseling should continue for approximately 15 minutes. At finish of this 15 minute counseling segment there will be five minutes provided for feedback. Both the observer and the client should share feedback with the counselor.

The exercise will continue until each participant has played each of the three rotating roles. The exercise should take about an hour to complete.

The role of the trainers will be to serve as roving consultants moving in and out of each group to intervene and provide feedback and suggestions as appropriate. They will be available to serve as consultants or trouble-shooters as problems emerge.

4:30-5:00 p.m. <u>Summary of Day I Activities</u>

The small groups should be reassembled into a large group and the day's activities will be reviewed and summarized by the trainers. Trainees will be encouraged to react to the last experience, which

is a summary experience for the day's activities. Problems will be identified, pitfalls pointed out, and feedback provided. Participants will be asked to react to the training experiences and to evaluate their utility.

DAY II

9:00-9:30 a.m. Review of Day I

Day I activities will be reviewed and discussed. The importance and laying a base and responding accurately will be emphasized. The need for interchangeable levels of response will be affirmed and it will be pointed out that no further effective counseling can continue until this base has been established. Questions will be answered and concerns will be resolved. Day II activities will be previewed.

9:30-10:00 a.m. Lecture/Discussion - Introduction to the Initiating Stage

The initiating stage represents the beginning of real "counseling." Prior to this point the task of the counselor is to explore with the client the concerns presented so they will each have a full understanding of the nature and scope of the situation under consideration. Once this interchangeability has been established and exploration has been essentially completed, we then move into the self-understanding phase. The goal of initiating is to help the client to develop integrative self-understanding. Integrative understanding means

simply that the client not only understands the dynamics of the situation but has also applied those understandings to the self.

In the initiating stage, the counselor attempts to help the client personalize the situation so that they will be able to understand how they can take action and begin to make changes. Too often counselors become stuck at this stage simply because they do not assist the client to personalize the problem. If, at this stage, both counselors and client feel that the problem is in the environment and has nothing to do with the client then no further action can be taken. The effective counselor realizes that although the environment contributes to the problem, the real crux of counseling is helping the client shape his response to that environment so that he can seek out and implement more effective responses and deal more adequately with reality. This particular stage can be difficult and frustrating because very often clients have trouble "owning" their behavior. In many ways, it is more comfortable to place the responsibility for behavior on others, on situations, or on social factors rather than accepting the fact that "If I want my world to be better I have to do

something about it." This is a major step in the counselor process because it is at this time that the client's problem is put into perspective and frame of reference that allows the client to respond and do something about it. Until the problem is personalized, the client has no clear understanding of what his or her role is in this particular situation. Too often, prior to this point, the client is into blaming, complaining, or seeing the problem as something outside of self thus generating a strong feeling of powerlessness. Again, this is not to say that external problems and limitations do not exist in the client's life, but rather that the role of counseling is to help the client to understand that they have the power to respond more effectively to life circumstances and they do have the power to make gains. The initiating stage actually represents the stage at which the counselor goes beyond what the client has said and attempts to help the client gain alternative frames of reference. It should be cautioned, though, that action at this stage is premature. Action programs are based upon self-understanding and to begin to develop action programs prior to developing a full understanding base

only leads to frustrations. On the counselors part, this can be a major stumbling block. Too often, counselors attempt to develop solutions and action programs prior to achieving full understanding of the needs of the client.

In the initiating stage there are some specific skills that counselors can use in an attempt to help clients achieve integrative self-understanding. We can talk about these in two ways.

1. First of all, in the initiating stage what, exactly, is the counselor attempting to have the client do? We can list some objectives: (Use Transparency D)
    1. The counselor attempts to help the client to personalize the problem. A critical objective.
    2. The counselor tries to help the client to understand the behavioral deficits. What is it that the client can't do but would like to do regarding the situation?
    3. The counselor helps the client set goals based upon the behavioral deficit.

Thus, this particular stage of counseling has some specific objectives. How then does the counselor go about doing this? What counseling

skills are necessary so that the counselor can help the client to achieve these objectives? There are four skills that have been identified as essential to the initiating stage. They are as follows:

1. Advanced Accurate Empathy:

   This refers to going beyond the interchangeable level of response and is based upon the achievement at primary level accurate empathy. To review, primary level accurate empathy is the attainment of interchangeable responses that include both the feeling and content components. Once we have done that we can go beyond the interchangeable and begin to introduce additive elements such as alternative framesof reference. Primary level accurate empathy tends to focus more on surface, not superficial, client data using the clients perspective while advanced level accurate empathy tends toward deeper exploration and understanding using alternate frames of reference. In essence, adding to what the client has said, it is imperative to emphasize that advanced level

accurate empathy can be used only after primary level has been established. Basic interchangeable understanding is critical to effective additive responses.

2. Confrontation

Confrontation is a powerful, yet much abused counseling skill. Too often counselors over use confrontation and counseling sessions become confrontation sessions. A major outcome of excessive or inappropriate confrontation is bruised feelings and a sense of rejection resulting in client resistance or rejection of the counseling. Confrontation is a double edged sword in that it has the capacity to be enormously destructive as well as the capacity to be enormously helpful. In using confrontation, counselors must be absolutely sure that they have achieved an interchangeable level of understanding with the client. Confrontation is rarely effective unless the client feels that the counselor understands the problem from the clients frame of reference. In using confrontation, counselors should be highly

sensitive to defensiveness, withdrawal and evasiveness on the part of the client which is an indication that the technique is not effective. Confrontation can lend itself to overuse. It is a potent and powerful tool and should be used with discretion: Never use an atom bomb to do the work of a firecracker.

3. Self-disclosure (Use Transparency E)
This counseling skill can be enormously helpful in promoting deeper self-exploration and self-understanding on the part of the client. Essentially, in using self-disclosure, counselors are sharing aspects of their personal lives, existence or experience, that are pertinent to the issues and goals of counseling. One must be cautious using self-disclosure because it can have the effect of removing focus from the client. A major ingredient of Stage I skills, attending and responding, requires that one keep the focus on the client since the client is the center of and reason for counseling. However, in the advanced initiating stage, it is not

only permissable, but highly effective, to use self-disclosure when it is done effectively. A simple test will indicate the effectiveness of self-disclosure; does the focus shift to the counselor or does it promote deeper self-exploration on the part of the client? The key to effective self-disclosure is to finish sharing it by providing a transitional statement which will link it directly back to the client's concern.

4. Immediacy

Immediacy is a composite, integrative skill frequently used in the initiating stage. It consists predominately of two previous skills: self-disclosure and challenge or confrontation. The purpose of immediacy is to help the client to deal concretely with here-and-now issues particularly as they relate to the counseling relationship and the use of that relationship by the client. For example, if the counselor sees that the client is manifesting in a subtle manner a manipulative approach to the counseling, the counselor might use immediacy by 1.) letting the client know that he is uncomfortable and

and affected by this indirect communication and 2.) to invite the client to examine the implications of this behavior for the counseling (challenge and confrontation). This skill is powerful and should always be used with discretion.

10:00-11:00 a.m. Exercise in Advanced Level Accurate Empthy

The group will divide itself into three equal subgroups. Each subgroup will contain a trainer and participants. The purpose of this exercise is to give the trainees and opportunity to differentiate primary level accurate empathy from advanced level accurate empathy.

Directions:

The trainer will distribute Handout D to the trainees. The exercise will begin with the trainer reading a sample excerpt and then leading a discussion regarding the differences between the two example responses attempting to help the trainees to identify the differences between primary level and advanced level accuracy empathy. Following the examples, a trainee will read one of the excerpts; another designated trainee will respond to the excerpt, using primary level accurate empathy. They will then wait a moment and respond again using advanced

level accuracy empathy. The role of the other group members will be to provide feedback to the person serving as a counselor. This exercise will proceed until each trainee has had an opportunity to respond to an excerpt and receive feedback.

11:00-11:20 a.m. Confrontation: Discussion and Demonstration

The skill of confrontation will be discussed and defined. It will be emphasized that confrontation is a strong skill and should be used judiciously. It will also be pointed out that becoming an accepting confrontor is a primary goal in the use of confrontation. One technique for useing confrontation will be presented and demonstrated. The essence of this technique is to combine a supportive response with a confrontive response. In other words, a person will say something positive about the client and follow that with a response which might be considered "negative" or perhaps more appropriately, a response designed to stimulate growth. The trainers, useing each other, will demonstrate this technique. Ideally they should choose as a focus some trainer behavior that has been evident to all of the trainees. For example, Trainer A might be doing the exercise with Trainer B.

Trainer A says, "I've noticed that when the group is broken down into small units you're very active and extremely supportive as you go aroung the room and attempt to help each individual master specific skills. I think that you have been very effective and they seem to have responded positively to the interest you have shown. On the other hand I have also noticed that you speak somewhat reluctantly when giving any feedback that is not positive and I sometimes get the impression that you are uncomfortable with negative feedback and that you would rather not say anything or perhaps gloss it over de-emphasizing its importance. I wonder if it might not be more effective if you were able to share more directly negative feedback with some of the trainees." After the demonstration, questions from the trainees will be entertained and the exercise will be introduced.

11:20-12:00 p.m. Round Robin Confrontation Exercise: Handout E

Directions:

Again, we will form into groups of three. It will be helpful if you can get into a group containing different people from this morning's group. In this group, we are going to practice the con-

frontation technique that we have demonstrated utilizing the Round Robin experience. The directions for this are printed on the handout that you have been given. Remember, when you are working and providing feedback to the person, you should point out something that the person does well and then to invite the person to examine something that would be improved. After each exchange, the roles will be reversed.

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00-1:30 p.m. Lecture/Demonstration: Self-Disclosure and Immediacy

At this time, the trainers will discuss in greater detail the issue of self-disclosure and immediacy. Self-disclosure represents a sharing, on the part of the counselor, some aspect of self which is revelant to the situation under discussion. The purpose of self-disclosure is to:

1. Model for the client the process of revealing, in realative safety, aspects of self.
2. To provide support for the client.

3. To help the client to focus more clearly, concretely, and accurately on areas of ineffective living.

Self-disclosure can be an effective intervention but can misused in three common ways:

1. Counselor self-disclosure should not add another burden to the client.
2. Counselor self-disclosure should not disctract clients from their concern.
3. Self-disclosure can be inappropriate if it is too frequent.

Immediacy will be discussed and defined as a combination of confrontation and self-disclosure skills. The need for immediacy frequently comes up in interviews and represents an opportunity to model and practice effective interpersonal skills. Immediacy can be defined as direct, mutual talk. However, it is important to point out that immediacy should not be used prior to the completion of Stage I skills. The trainers will then demonstrate both self-disclosure and immediacy in a fish-bowl setting. They will use each other as counselor and counselee and will model effective and ineffective self-disclosure techniques. Once the

modeling has been done they will solicit the group to ask questions and react. Then another pair of trainers will model the use of immediacy in effective and ineffective interchanges. The group will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

1:30-2:00 p.m. Summary and Review of Stages I & II: Lecture

The trainers will review and integrate the material presented thus far in the training. They will point out that in Stage I they covered attending and responding which laid the basis for all the further work. They then covered Stage II (or initiating) skills which provided the basis for dynamic self-understanding. Once each of these stages has been completed, the client is ready to begin the move to the final stage of counseling - the communication or action stage. Counselors, particularly beginners, or those without formal training may ask the question, "How do we know when we have completed the initiating stage"? While there are no clear guidelines as to when it is completed, generally the client will indicate a readiness to move from that stage to the action stage by beginning to spontaneously talk about how they might apply their emerging self-

understanding. They will evidence some insight and introduce a readiness to move on to the action stage. Counselors should be sensitive to these signals. When they feel that the client has achieved some significant levels of self-understanding and are ready to go on to the next stage, they should tentatively begin to explore that with the client. It is important to remember that Stages I & II provide the critical basis for action. Until these stages are fully complete, it is not productive to move into the action phase. Often counseling is ineffective because counselors either pay no or only perfunctuatory attention to these initial stages and move too quickly to the action oriented stage. An opportunity for questions will be provided and the trainers will refer the participants back to Handout A to review their progress in the basic skills model.

2:00-3:00 p.m. <u>The Communication Stage: Developing Action Programs</u>

This stage, in essence, represents a culmination of the counseling process. Once exploration and self-understanding have been achieved the client is ready to move outside the counseling setting

and into his or her real world to begin to apply some of the learnings they have gained. It is important to remember as you enter the action stage, that although self-understanding is necessary for effective action, it is not sufficient. That is to say, just because a client has generated understanding does not mean that they will run out into their world and spontaneously begin to act differently. The elaboration and implementation of action program is a critical component of the counseling process. It is not enough for the client to achieve insight but rather that insight must be carefully supported and translated into action. Specific counselor behaviors that are crucial to the action stage are as follows: (Use Transparency F)

1. The Provision of Directionality

   Once a client has integrated self-understanding they are often very eager to begin. Typically clients will attempt to achieve too much too quickly, and/or attempt to begin work on the most difficult aspects of the problem. The counselor's role is to direct the client to relevant and attainable objectives.

2. Support

The clients are going to need massive doses of encouragement, reinforcement and support as they move through this particular stage. You must remember that the process of implementing new behavior is frustrating and difficult. We learn it, try it and experience frustration and failure. It is necessary to receive strong support for attempts to implement new behavior or one may regress to previous unproductive behavior patterns.

3. Elaboration of Action Programs

The counselor as a behavioral technologist must be aware of the various methods available to impact and maintain behavior change. They must be able to provide clients with information regarding how one goes about changing behavior and must help the client come up with a plan that makes sense and is workable using available and relevant strategies.

4. Effective Goal Setting Skills

Counselors must help their clients to set goals that appropriate to the attainment of the objectives set forth in the behavior

change plan. Effectively set goals have a number of components:

a) The goal setting process needs to be shared by both counselor and client. Goals which are set by the counselor for the client are almost always less effective than client set goals. However, clients are often inexperienced in uneffective goal-setting process and need some assistance from the counselor in setting goals. Therefore, in counseling, it is most appropriate for the goal setting process to be mutually shared by counselor and client.

b) All goals should meet SPAMO criteria

S Specific: all goals should be highly specific so that both the counselor and the client know exactly what is to be done, what is to be attained and what steps are to be taken.

P Pertinent: goals must be pertinent to the objectives of counseling. If a a goal lacks pertinence, then the client will have a very low level

of investment in the goal and be less likely to work productively.

A Attainable: the attainable goal is one that can be realistically achieved within the time frame of the counseling. For example, individuals presenting themselves for employment counseling may want a job that would require a college degree, but since they have yet to earn the GED it would be inappropriate to set as a goal, attainment of the job requiring a college degree. A more attainable goal might be to look at a job that was more immediately available while they simultaneously begin to prepare for the job requiring more sophisticated skills.

M Measurable: goals must be measurable. Both the counselor and the client should be able to measure the extent to which a given goal has or has not been achieved. In essence, this means that all goals must have behavioral correlates and be quantifiable.

- Observable: effective goals must be observable. That is they should have a behavioral component that is available for observation to anyone who is in the client's world. Goals which are not observable; goals which go on inside the client's head are very difficult to report on and to be accountable for. Therefore, help the client to define and set goals that have an observable component.

It should be emphasized that goal setting is at the heart of counseling. Effectively set goals are critical to the attainment of any action programs in counseling and counselors must be expert in this process. Distribute Handout F.

3:00-4:30 p.m. Putting It all Together - An Exercise In Utilizing Basic Counseling Skills

The purpose of this exercise is to provide the opportunity to practice what has been learned in this workshop, under supervision and to receive feedback on your progress. During this exercise, you will attempt to follow the model from the beginning through the goal setting, action stage. You will

be asked to divide into groups of two. Within the group of two, each person will take turns serving as counselor and client. The counselors will counsel the client for 30 minutes. At the end of the first 30 minute segment the counselor and client will discuss the experience and provide each other with feedback. Roles will then be reversed and the process repeated. During this session it is important that each of the counselors attempt to go all the way through the model to reach the goal setting stage with their client without skipping any of the intermediary steps. It would also be helpful if the trainees will be able to select a partner with whom they have not worked for this interview so that they will be less contaminated with previous experience with the person. The trainers during this exercise, will serve as roving observers and be available to sit in on any of the sessions providing feedback to the participants as appropriate.

4:30-5:00 p.m. Summary and Evaluation

The group will reassemble and the trainers will summarize the two day training. They will highlight the important aspects and discuss the areas where

the trainees seem to be most effective as well as the areas in which the trainees seem to be in need of further practice and development. The bibliography will be discussed, questions entertained and the evaluation instruments distributed. Loose ends will be tied up and closing comments will be made.

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Appendix A

Summary Training Schedule

DAY I

9:00-9:30 a.m.	Introduction and Overview
9:30-10:15 a.m.	Goals and Objectives of the Helping Process.
10:15-11:00 a.m.	Attending Skills Exercise
11:00-11:15 a.m.	Discussion of Attending Exercise
11:15-11:50 a.m.	Active Listening Exercise
11:50-12:00 p.m.	Discussion of Listening Exercise
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-1:15 p.m.	Introduction to Responding Skills
1:15-2:00 p.m.	Responding: Large Group Demonstration
2:00-2:30 p.m.	Small Group Exercise: Responding to Feelings
2:30-3:00 p.m.	Responding To Feelings: Discussion of Exercise
3:00-3:30 p.m.	Lecture/Demonstration - Responding to Meaning
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Small Group Practice: Responding to Meaning
4:30-5:00 p.m.	Summary of Day I Activities

DAY II

9:00-9:30 a.m.	Review of Day I
9:30-10:00 a.m.	Lecture/Discussion - Introduction to the Initiating Stage
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Exercise in Advanced Level Accurate Empathy
11:00-11:20 a.m.	Confrontation: Discussion and Demonstration
11:20-12:00 p.m.	Round Robin Confrontation Exercise
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-1:30 p.m.	Lecture/Demonstration: Self-Disclosure and Immediacy

1:30-2:00 p.m.	Summary and Review of Stage I and II
2:00-3:00 p.m.	The Communication Stage: Developing Action Programs
3:00-4:30 p.m.	Putting It all Together: An Exercise In Utilizing Basic Counseling Skills
4:30-5:00 p.m.	Summary and Evaluation of Training

APPENDIX B

Transparency A . . . . . Introduction Exercise

Transparency B . . . . . Handout A
An Overview of the
Components of the
Helping Process

Transparency C . . . . . Responding

Transparency D . . . . . Initiating Stage

Transparency E . . . . . Self-Disclosure

Transparency F . . . . . Action Stage

Transparency A

Introduction Exercise

Name

Employer

Percentage of time spent in counseling

Professional preparation both in-service and for professional degrees

Training expectations

Which element of the counseling process do you feel is most crucial?

Transparency B

Handout A

An Overview of the Components of

the Helping Process

GOALS	STAGES	SKILLS
Exploration	Attending	Physical attending Psychological attending Listening
	Responding	Primary Level Accurate Empathy Concreteness Genuineness Respect
Understanding	Initiating	Advanced Level Accurate Empathy Confrontation Self-Disclosure Immediacy
Action	Communication	Support Directionality Goal Setting Behavior Change Strategies Feedback

Transparency C

Responding

To feelings:

You feel _____

To meaning:

You feel _____ because _____

To content:

You said _____

Transparency D

Initiating Stage

1. The counselor attempts to help the client to personalize the problem.

2. The counselor tries to help the client to understand the behavioral defects (what is it that the client can not do but would like to do regarding the situation?)

3. The counselor helps the client set goals based upon behavioral deficit.

Transparency E

Self-Disclosure

I. The purpose of self-disclosure
   1. To model for the client the process of revealing in relative safety aspects of self
   2. To provide support for client
   3. To help the client focus more clearly and concretely on areas of ineffective living

II. Common misuses of self-disclosure
   1. Counselor self-disclosure should not
      A. add another burden to the client
      B. distract the client from his/her concern
      C. be a frequent occurrence

Transparency F

Action Stage

Crucial counseling behaviors

1. The provision of directionality
2. Support
3. Elaboration of action programs
4. Effective goal setting skills
   - 4. 1. Client/counselor share in goal setting process
   - 4. 2. Goals should meet SPAMO criteria
     - S - specific
     - P - pertinent
     - A - attainable
     - M - measurable
     - O - observable

APPENDIX C

Handout A . . . . . An Overview of the Components of the Helping Process

* Handout B . . . . . Attending to Verbal Messages: An Exercise in Parroting

Handout C . . . . . Feeling Vocabulary

* Handout D . . . . . Confronting and Responding to Confrontation

* Handout E . . . . . The Distinction Between Primary-Level and Advanced Accurate Empathy

Handout F . . . . . A Goal-Setting Checklist for Counselors

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HANDOUT A

An Overview of the Components of

the Helping Process

GOALS	STAGES	SKILLS
→ Exploration	Attending	Physical attending Psychological attending Listening
	Responding	Primary Level Accurate Empathy Concreteness Genuineness Respect
Understanding	Initiating	Advanced Level Accurate Empathy Confrontation Self-Disclosure Immediacy
→ Action	Communication	Support Directionality Goal Setting Behavior Change Strategies Feedback

HANDOUT B

Attending to Verbal Messages:

An Exercise in Parroting

There is a great difference between parroting back to a person what he has said and communicating to him with accurate empathy that you have understood, from his frame of reference, what he has said. However, accurate empathy does depend, in part, on your ability to attend and remember the substance of the other's verbal messages. Therefore, this is an exercise in parroting--the ability merely to repeat back to the speaker what he has said to you. Later on, the substantial differences between parroting and communicating accurate empathy will be emphasized.

Directions

Trainees should be divided into groups of three: a communicator, a listener and an observer.

1. The communicator makes a statement about himself, but limits his statement to one (complex) statement.

2. The listener uses the formula: "You said that . . ." and repeats the substance of what the communicator has said.

3. The observer, who may jot down written notes to help him in his task, then gives the listener feedback on his accuracy. The feedback should be very brief and should indicate what the listener has left out, if anything.

HANDOUT C

FEELING VOCABULARY

POSITIVE FEELINGS

INTENSE	STRONG	MODERATE	MILD
loved adored idolized	enchanted ardor infatuated tender	liked cared-for esteemed affectionate found	friendly regarded benevolent
alive	vibrant independent capable happy great proud gratified	excited patient strong gay good inspired anticipating strong amused	wide-awake at-ease relaxed comfortable content keen amazed alert sensitive
wanted lustful worthy pity respected empathy awed	worthy passionate admired sympathetic important concerned appreciated consoled	secure yearning popular peaceful appealing determined	sure attractive approved untroubled graceful
elation enthusiastic zealous	delighted eager optimistic joyful courage hopeful	pleased excited interested jolly relieved glad	turned-on warm amused
courageous	valient brave brilliant	ventureous peaceful intelligent	daring comfortable smart

NEGATIVE FEELINGS

MILD	MODERATE	STRONG	INTENSE
unpopular	suspicious envious enmity aversion	disgusted resentful bitter detested fed-up	hate unloved abhor loathed despised
listless moody lethargic gloomy dismal discontented tired	dejected unhappy bored bad forlorn disappointed wearied	frustrated sad depressed sick disconsolate dissatisfied fatigued	angry hurt miserable pain lonely cynical exhausted
indifferent unsure impatient dependent unimportant regretful	torn-up inadequate ineffectual helpless resigned apathetic shamed	worn-out useless weak hopeless forlorn rejected guilty	worthless impotent futile abandoned estrangement degraded
bashful self-conscious	shy uncomfortable	embarrassed inhibited	humiliate alienated
puzzled edgy upset reluctant timid mixed-up	baffled confused nervous tempted tense worried perplexed troubled	bewildered frightened anxious dismayed apprehensive dreadful apprehensive disturbed	shocked panicky trapped horrified afraid scared terrified threatened
sullen provoked	disdainful contemptous alarmed annoyed provoked	antagonistic vengeful indignant mad	infuriated furious

HANDOUT D

The Distinction Between

Primary-level and Advanced Accurate Empathy

In the following exercise, assume that the helper and the client have established rapport and that the client is beginning to explore his feelings, experiences and behavior rather freely. Some flavor of this rapport will be given under the heading "context".

Directions

1. Imagine the client speaking directly to you and then do two things:

   a. First, respond with primary-level accurate empathy.

   b. Then respond with some statement of advanced accurate empathy. Try to help the client take the larger view of his problem, see the implications or logical conclusions of what he is saying and so on.

Example:

Father of family, 48, to counselor:

Context: This man is exploring the poor relationships he has with his wife and children. In general, he feels that he is the victim, that his family is not treating him right. He has not yet started to examine the implications of his own behavior.

"I get a lot of encouragement for being witty at parties. Almost everybody laughs--and heartily. I think that I provide a lot of entertainment and that others like it. But this is another way I flop at home. When I try to be funny, my wife and kids don't laugh. At times, they take the whole thing wrong and get angry. I actually have to watch myself in my own home."

a. primary level accurate empathy: "What you see as good entertainment just doesn't go over at home. And your failure mystifies and maybe even irritates you."

b. advanced accurate empathy: "You get irritated when your family responds to you so differently. It almost sounds as if they don't want to see you as an entertainer at home. I wonder if

perhaps they would simply prefer to have a straightforward

you."

1. First-year engineering graduate student to counselor:

Context: This student has been exploring his disappointment with himself and with his performance in graduate school. He has explored such issues as his dislike for the school and for some of the teachers.

"I just don't have much enthusiasm. My grades are just okay--maybe even a little below par. I know I could do better if I wanted to. I don't know why my disappointment in the school and in some of the faculty members can get to me so much. Ever since I can remember--even in grammar school, when I didn't have any idea what an engineer was--I've wanted to be an engineer. Theoretically, I should be happy as a lark. Or at least I shouldn't be this depressed."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

2. Man, 66, to counselor:

Context: This man has retired. He has been exploring with the counselor some of the problems his retirement has created.

"The kids are all gone. My wife died two years ago. And now that I've stopped working, I seem just to ramble around the house aimlessly--which is not like me at all. I suppose I should get rid of the house, but it is filled with lots of memories--bittersweet memories, now. There are a lot of good years here. The years seem to have slipped by and caught me unaware."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

3. Woman, 33, to clergyman:

Context: This woman has been examining the quality of her interpersonal life. She is not married. She has one very close friend whom she counts on a great deal. She has been exploring her general interpersonal style and, specifically, her relationship with this one close friend.

"Ruth and I are on and off like electric lights with each other lately. When we are on, it is great. We have lunch together often enough, go shopping--you know, all that kind of stuff. The companionship is great. But sometimes she seems to just click off. She's been off for two weeks now. I can tell it in her voice on the phone. Why do we always have to have these falling outs? I know we are different types. She is rather quiet, and I am loud--the blasting type. But our differences don't ordinarily get in our way. At least I don't think so."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

4. Man, 40, to marriage counselor:

Context: This is the third time that this man has come to see a marriage counselor during the past four years. His wife has never come with him. He spends only a session or two with the counselor and then drops out.

"I could go on telling you what she does and doesn't do. It is a litany. She really knows how to punish. I don't see how I've put up with it this long. I keep telling her to see a counselor. She won't do it. So here I am again, in her place. I've told this story over and over again, but it doesn't help. I've tried almost everything."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

5. High school senior to school counselor:

Context: This girl expected that she would be chosen valedictorian of her class. Her parents counted on it; she counted on it. She is trying to deal with her disappointment.

"I know that I would have liked to be the class valedictorian--I mean, insofar as that is something that can be desired. They chose Jane. She is a good person and she will do a good job. She speaks well. She is popular. And, after all, no one has a right to be valedictorian. I would be kidding myself if I thought differently. I've done better in school than Jane but I am not as popular. It is certainly nothing I can get angry over."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

6. College professor, 43, to a friend who is a counselor:

Context: He is interested in examining his hierarchy of values. He is vaguely dissatisfied with it and he talks to his friends about it from time to time. He had just come from a depressing day of classes.

"I am depressed. I don't feel like working any more today. I actually work all the time. I can't think of any day I get up that I don't intend to devote to work. I think I even begrudge myself the time I take for relaxation. There has been no day in the past couple of years when I

have said 'Well, today is a day off. I will go out and do what I want.' I thought that all that I wanted to do was work. After all, it is my choice. I do what I do freely."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

7. Man, 54, to counselor:

Context: This man has a variety of problems. His tendency is to ruminate constantly on his defects.

"To feel bad, all I have to do is review what has happened in my life and take a good look at what is going on now. This past year, I let my drinking problem get the best of me for four months. Over the years I have messed up my marriage. Now my wife and I are separated. I don't have the kind of job that can support two households and the job market is really tight. I am not so sure what skills I have to market, anyhow. I may be looking at the negative side of my life, but there is a hell of a lot of it."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

8. Woman, 35, to counselor:

Context: This woman is divorced. She has a daughter about 12 years old. She has been talking about her current relationships with men, reporting that she has lied to her daughter about the sexual aspects of these relationships.

"I don't want to hurt my daughter by letting her see my other side. I don't know whether she could handle it. What do you think? I would like to tell her everything. I just don't want her to think less of me. I like sex. I have been used to it in marriage, and it is just too hard to give up. I wish you would give me an answer on what to do about my daughter."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

9. Woman, 32, talking to a friend:

Context: This woman has attended a play with a good friend. As they leave the theatre, she begins to ruminate on her life, as she has on a number of other occasions.

"When I come out of a play like this, or a good movie, my spirits soar. By tomorrow, I will be back on the ground again. But there is something good in letting my spirits soar from time to time. I hate intellectual analyses of the 'meaning' of a movie or play. I just let myself flow with its mood for a while and the world seems bright and full of possibilities again. Tomorrow isn't here yet."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

10. Man, 31, to his fellow group members:

Context: This man meets with this group once a week for a couple of hours. The members use the group experience to examine their life-styles, values,

ways of inter-relating, family life, and so on. They know one another well. He has mentioned his mother on a few occasions before this session.

"My mother and I get along well. Oh, there are always those little misunderstandings with me or with my wife when she spends a few days at our house. But I am sure this happens in most households. Mom is very self-reliant, and I admire her for that. She is strong-willed, and I think that is great in a woman her age. She won't buckle under to life. I had to calm my wife down just the other day after one of the little misunderstandings. But we have to expect these."

a. _____

_____

_____

b. _____

_____

_____

HANDOUT E

Confronting and Responding to Confrontation

The Confrontation Round Robin

Directions:

The purpose of this exercise is to give trainees an opportunity to practice both confrontation and good response to confrontation.

1. Review the general format for the round-robin experience. Also review the material on confrontation and good response to confrontation in The Skilled Helper.

2. Let's call the partners A and B. Partner A should (1) point out something that B does well and (2) invite B to examine some dimension of his behavior that could be improved (something that could be developed into a strength).

3. The partner being confronted (B), before responding to the confrontation itself, should indicate to A that he has understood what A is saying (accurate understanding). Only then should B proceed to explore the areas of strength and weakness suggested by the confronter.

4. Partner B then becomes the confronter, and the process is repeated with Partner A.

Unless there is some reason for not doing so, each member of the training group should have a round with every other member.

Example

Partner A: "In our group sessions, you take pains to see to it that there is a great deal of accurate empathic understanding going on. You yourself try to understand others and you urge the other members of the group, principally by your example, to do the same. You're always genuine, and most of the time you're quite accurate."

"However, you tend to limit yourself to primary-level understanding. You're very slow to make demands on the members of the group, even when you're in the best spot to do so--for example, by using advanced accurate empathy. Your rapport is excellent, and I think you could use it to help others make demands on themselves."

Partner B: "You see me as quite good at basic accurate empathy. It is essential in the group, and I do help provide it. However, I don't usually move beyond primary-level understanding, even though I might 'merit' doing so since I do take such pains to understand. I should work on increasing my initiating skills."

Partner B then moves on to explore the content of his confrontation with Partner A for a few minutes.

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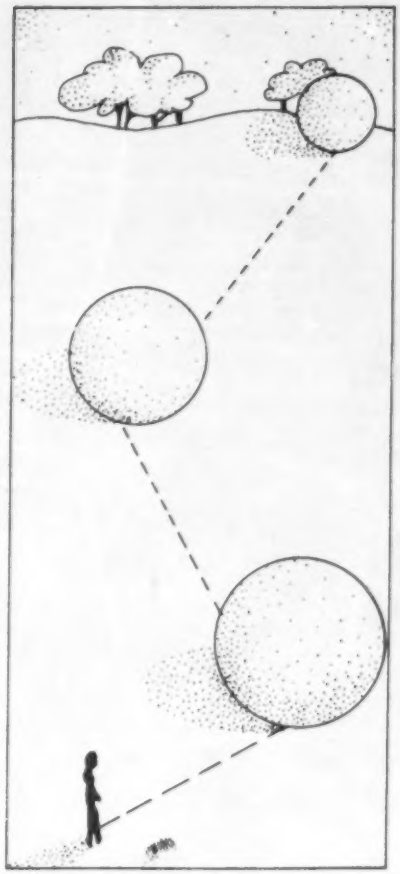
Handout F

A Goal-Setting Checklist for Counselors



In the literature of the helping professions there is little debate on the advisability of helping clients to set and achieve personal goals. Once the relationship and the counseling process are clearly established, effective goal setting becomes a vital part of the counseling activity. This is especially true if client behavioral change is to occur. Helping a client to manifest new self-enhancing behavior means that goal setting is continually in a counselor's consciousness. But *how* are goals most effectively set in counseling? Herein the specifics of the process are spelled out by detailing evaluative criteria for goal setting and providing a rationale for the inclusion of each.

Criteria for Effective Goal Setting

At the beginning of any counseling experience some minigoals are directly set and attained, i.e., goals to explore client expectations and to use portions of the counseling session in given ways. Such is not the principal thrust of what is being discussed here, however much they are vital to early counseling phases (Vriend & Dyer 1974). Effective counseling begins with the important work of exploration, wherein self-defeating mental, emotional, and physical behaviors are identified and labeled. It then proceeds toward client self-understanding of why such self-limiting behaviors exist, what psychological maintenance system enables their perseveration, what the client gets from such unproductive thinking, feeling, and doing. Next, the effective counselor helps the client to determine more productive alternatives to the undesirable old behavior and secures a bona fide commitment from the client to work at being different, to work on positive self-change (Vriend & Dyer 1973). It is at this action phase, when a definite counseling directionality has been established, that goal setting be-

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comes the paramount activity in the helping process.

Reviewed here are seven specific criteria for judging effective goal setting in counseling. Each criterion is discussed and placed in a counseling context.

1. Mutual agreement on goals is vital. The effective goal-setting counselor avoids imposing goals on a client. Without emphasis on mutuality, client commitment to working on goals can hardly be guaranteed. An imposed goal, one originating in the mind of the counselor, is inappropriate because it excludes the client from the decision-making process and places responsibility for change within the counselor, thus encouraging greater dependence rather than independence.

This is not to say that the counselor does not assume responsibility for fostering goal-oriented thinking. Most clients come to counseling with low-level goal-setting and goal-achieving skills, particularly in the personal areas most troublesome to them, and the counselor, as a result of training and experience, has the kind of neutrality, acumen, and competence that the client lacks. Thus, the counselor introduces goal-oriented thinking when the process of counseling has progressed to the point where such questions as the following are appropriate: Have you considered any possible alternatives to your present way of acting and reacting in this case? Can you be different under these circumstances? In what ways might you have reacted, if you weren't tied into your own characteristic way of behaving here?

Such urgings are helpful in stimulating a client into thinking about ways of being different. Too many counselors have the inclination to do all of the work of goal setting for their clients, sometimes out of impatience, wanting to speed up the counseling process, sometimes out of a misguided notion that they know better than their clients which goals ought to be set. They lay down goals and then work to help clients achieve them, often futilely. The effective counselor, in contrast, is self-monitoring and ever-aware of the fact that most people resist being told what to do. They know that an imposed goal constitutes a kind of command, a case of taking over. The message thus becomes: "I am the important person here, not you. I will do your thinking for you and when you accomplish the new behavior, you will be grateful to me and thankful that you found me in the first place." Ineffective counselors find themselves ordering or begging their clients: "Will you do this for me? Will you try . . . etc. . ."

How many well-intentioned counselors have the "answer" or "solution" in their own heads? They desperately want to give it away, knowing that subsequent circumstances in their clients' lives would be wonderful if only their clients would incorporate such solutions into their self-systems and behavioral repertoires? But this is an unsophisticated way of thinking, certainly not stemming from any understanding of how people change. Clients hear these "answers." They sound good at the time. But later, on some level of their consciousness, they remind themselves otherwise: "Me? I'm different. That might work for my counselor or someone else, but it just wouldn't work for me."

While clients may agree to work on them, the chances for such goals being met in the world outside of the counseling are seriously minimized. So the aware counselor respects the fact that a counseling goal must be mutually determined and, most desirably, elicited from the client.

2. Goal specificity promotes goal achievement. Goals may be broad or narrow, immediate, intermediate, or long-range. The time factor implied in the concept of a broad long-range goal can be productively invoked to give the counseling some directionality, if the counseling contract includes many sessions. Beyond this, global long-range goals offer little. Such global goals as the following are futile without specifying steps for their attainment: "I'm going to find myself." "I'm going to be more open." "I'm going to improve my self-image." "I intend to eliminate shyness." These and millions like them tend to be useless in counseling for they lack specificity. One has no way of knowing if, when, how, or why one has "found oneself." Rather than being realistic action plans, such goals are mere vague descriptions of client desires.

The tendency to set global goals occurs frequently in counseling simply because they are easier to name. Getting down to details is harder work than settling for generalities. If successful goal achievement is to be assured, the goal-setting process becomes a chain, each link a definable piece of new client behavior sequentially added to that which has already been mastered. Small, highly focused goals can be carried out in a direct fashion.

Goals, precursors to change and growth, are difficult for many novice counselors to pin down. Gottman and Leiblum (1974, p. 48) have provided a succinct definition for all counseling practitioners: "Goals are *discrepancy statements* which compare current functioning to some criterion of competence or to some normative standard of competence in those situations. They answer four vital questions: (1) Who? (2) will do what? (3) to what extent? (4) under what conditions? To this we would add a fifth question: When? Pinning down the time is crucial.

3. On-target goals are relevant to the self-defeating behavior of the goal setter. Specific mental, emotional, and physical behaviors that impede a client's becoming a more in-charge person are focused on early in the counseling. Goals aimed at the elimination of such self-defeating behaviors have the greatest client pertinence.

A goal that has no practical application in the life of a client will become an exercise in futility or frustration. Often clients will want to try out all kinds of new behaviors that are unrelated to the cluster of personally ineffective and self-demeaning thoughts and deeds that have characterized their living. Such can be interpreted as resistance to the always difficult and risky work involved in bringing about self-change. Similarly, clients will choose to do some verbal wandering and look for easy alternatives, naming essentially irrelevant possibilities or ones with which they have already demonstrated acceptable expertise. The effective counselor watches for relevance and pertinence in the goal-setting process and helps clients to zero in on self-forfeiting thinking and doing. The effective counselor does not encourage or endorse banal or trite goals that reinforce client avoidance.

4. Effectively set goals are achievable and success-oriented. Often a client does not achieve a goal that has been mutually agreed upon during the counseling. Then, rather than thinking the client has failed, the wise counselor knows he or she has been remiss, a party to ineffective goal setting. Positive reinforcements, both from the counselor and from the intrinsic payoffs in the achievement, are a condition of learning new behaviors. Knowing this, the effective counselor seeks to be aware that the goals being set are realistically attainable. Many clients will agree to attempt virtually impossible goals for themselves simply to please the counselor or because they have a misreading of their present moment abilities, exaggerated in the counseling session by excitement over the possibilities of being different.

Goldstein, Heller, and Sechrest (1966) note that "a cognitive structure which enables an individual *correctly* to anticipate and organize his experiences will facilitate learning and retention of new or more elaborate behavioral sequences" (p. 240). Accurate cognitive structuring is a necessary prerequisite to success-oriented goal setting. The dice ought to be loaded in favor of success. The individual who tries and does not succeed is likely to think, "I knew I couldn't be different and now I've proven it. I've blown it, the way I always do. I guess I'm just destined to stay the way I am." Such internalized sentences reinforce the self-defeating thinking that the client had in the first place.

5. Effectively set goals are quantifiable and measurable. Gottman and Leiblum (1974) remind us of the need for measurement criteria in counseling and psychotherapy. "Remember: [they declare] Anything that occurs, occurs with some frequency and can therefore be counted" (p. 53). The effective counselor understands the folly in having clients attempt to accomplish something that cannot be measured. If a client cannot later say, "There, I did it and I know it is done," the sought-after goal lacked measurability. Thus, the aim to find out more about colleges is unmeasurable because it is imprecise. But a goal that includes talking to three admissions counselors from three named colleges before next Friday and reading up on the profiles of five additional colleges in a particular book in a particular library is quantifiable and measurable.

Just as clients need to know when they have accomplished a goal, they and the counselor need to know how frequently and intensely certain behaviors occur, especially mental and emotional behaviors. So early in the counseling diagnostic goals can be set that later lead to behavioral change goals. Thus, clients can be provided with wrist counters or be asked to record in a log how many times they feel angry, have suicidal thoughts, or how many times they want to speak up to a given other person and don't over a given time span. Ratings scales for gauging the intensity of such behaviors can also be constructed. The client can be taught to grade each recurrence of a thought or feeling at some level of acuity. Once an accurate picture of the status quo emerges, treatment goals for change can be made more realistic and results can be compared with baseline data.

The feeling of accomplishment that accompanies goal achievement is vital for clients. If clients do not know and feel that they are making gains, the drive to persist in the unnatural business of behaving differently, of continuing their difficult efforts, loses creditability. Thus, goals that include the why, when, how, with whom, and numbers of times lead to successful new behavior acquisition, while fuzzy, nonmeasurable goals lead to a client's being in the dark about his or her own progress.

6. Effectively set goals are behavioral and observable. Client goals that are not stated in terms that are translatable to action are weaker than those that can be. This is to say that the most effectively set goals result in behavior that can be witnessed. This criterion is similar to the measurability component, but it differs in that the stress is on looking at the behaviors, not counting them. Thus, a goal that enjoins a client to simply "think" about something lacks external confirmation, but one that includes writing down thoughts, speaking them into a tape recorder, or discussing them with others, adds a behavioral dimension that is observable.

Goals manifested in behavior that enables witnesses to register and confirm them are crucial, even when the client is the only witness of self-generated behavior. The witness aspect allows the client to monitor and evaluate aspirational progress with the assistance of outside-the-self referents. The counselor provides aids for in-session behavior, but does not live in the client's life space outside the counseling where it really counts. When behavioral references for goals are unclear, the very purpose of counseling becomes obscured. Effective counselors know that actors have difficulty simultaneously acting and seeing their actions. Thus, they help clients to set goals that can be mirrored by others. The feedback that members of a counseling group can give to any respective member makes group counseling powerful for just this reason.

7. Goals have been effectively structured when a client understands them and can restate them clearly. A common error made by counselors in goal setting is assuming that clients comprehend. This pertains to most action-oriented aspects of the counseling process: counselors often fail to take the time required for a client to state what was helpful in an interview or even what transpired. For effective goal setting, client restatement is crucial. Novice counselors, laboring under the assumption that stated goals have been well understood, are surprised in later sessions when clients indicate they have not even attempted the goals because they could not clearly identify what they had committed themselves to do. Client agreement on a goal is not enough. Unless a client can repeat back precisely what it is that will be done during the between-sessions period in the measurable and observable terms stressed above and why such action is personally productive, the goal-setting process is incomplete. After client restatement, distortions and misperceptions can be eliminated and goals can be assessed according to the six preceding criteria. Goal modification can then occur. The session ends with both client and counselor in knowledgeable agreement about the details of the client's psychological homework.

Criteria Checklist

The seven criteria for assessing effective goal-setting skills in counseling and therapy constitute a convenient checklist that any psychological helper can keep in mind. The counselor can ask, "Am I helping this client to set goals that are: (a) High in mutuality? (b) Specific in nature? (c) Relevant to the client's self-defeating behavior? (d) Achieveable and success-oriented? (e) Quantifiable and measurable? (f) Behavioral and observable? (g) Understandable and repeatable?" Also, the counselor who functions with such a mindset will be more likely to identify and gauge the worth of helping efforts that precede goal setting, for client behavioral change will seldom occur in willy-nilly fashion without client decisions to do the specific work required to bring about such change. In this sense, client goal-achievement or lack of it becomes a standard for assessing counseling productivity in every stage of the process.

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